

The Way of Israels Welfare;

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OR AN

# Exhortation

To be with GOD, that He may be with us:

As it was Delivered in a

## SERMON

Preached at Hartford on Connecticut in New-England,

MAY 13<sup>th</sup> 1686.

Being the Day of ELECTION there.

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By Mr. John Whiting, Pastor to the second Church of  
Christ in Hartford.

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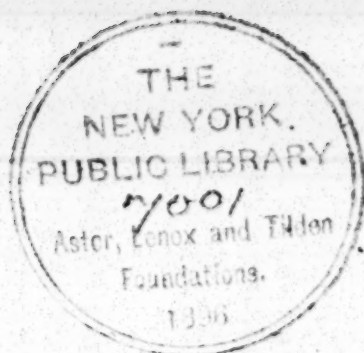
2 Chron. 24. 10. Thus saith God, why transgress ye the Com-  
mandments of the Lord, that ye cannot prosper; because  
ye have forsaken the Lord, he hath also forsaken you.

Amos 5. 15. Seek good and not evil that ye may live, and so  
the Lord the God of Hosts shall be with you, as ye have  
spoken.

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## Christian Reader,

**T***He thoughts of the righteous (Solomon telleth us) are right, Prov. 12. 4. Their mouth speaketh wisdom, and their tongue talketh judgment. What precious thoughts have the Saints in all ages had of the presence of God with them: Moses knew not how or what to do without it, Exod. 35. 15. If thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence. Solomon in all his glory is an earnest beggar for it. 1 King. 8. 57. The Lord our God be with us, as he was with our Fathers, let him not leave us or forsake us. Jeremiah reckoned himself and the people with him to be in a dangerous, yea desperate condition if God should be gone, and therefore pleaded accordingly, Jer. 14. 8. O the hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in the time of trouble, why shouldest thou be as a stranger in the Land, &c. Leave us not, &c.*

*Doubtless this was right: O that the same mind were in us. It would be our wisdom and our understanding in the sight of all our observers. Wo be to us when God shall depart from us, our Judges cannot deliver us, unless the Lord be with them, Judg. 2. 17. Our Prophets cannot perswade us to believe and turn to the Lord except his hand be with them. Act. 11. 21. Our own strength sufficeth not to carry us through duty,*

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*John 15. 5. Without me, ye can do nothing: or to uphold us in time of Temptation, 2 Chron. 32. 31* How be it in the business of the Embassadors of the Princes of Babylon, the Lord left him. *Our Enterprizes will not prosper except the Lord lend his helping hand, Psal. 127. 1. Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it. Our employments cannot benefit or satisfie us, unless the Lord influence them, Mat. 4. 4. Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God, Hag 1. 6. Ye have sown much, and bring in little, ye have eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink but are not filled with drink; ye cloth your selves, but there is none warm, &c.*

*God with us is our safety and our glory: [our safety] Deut. 33. 12. The beloved of the Lord shall dwell safely by him, and he will cover them all the day long. If God be for us, who can be against us? Men if not in affection, yet in effect will be our Friends. The same Divine Wisdom and Grace, that turneth the wrath of man to the praise of God, will turn it to his peoples salvation: It's our glory also; Jerusalem had been the perfection of beauty, the glory of the whole earth, Lam. 2. 15. but when forsaken of God, her glory flieth away as a bird, all that honoured her, despise her, because they have seen her nakedness, Lam. 1. 9.*

*May the little flock in the Wilderness inherit the favourable presence of God, it shall suffice: The lines fall to us in pleasant places, Josh. 1. 17. Only the Lord thy God be with thee as he was with Moses; (1.) he had been with Moses, (2) for his presence in like manner to be with Joshua, was an only thing: (3) When the people so prize and pray for it, they are not disappointed, as the Context sheweth.*

*A light esteem of God is the danger of New England: he is not wont hastily to forsake his people. How shall I give thee*



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thee up Ephraim? But he liketh to live where he is loved. Had he our hearts, (we should without fail) have his Company, and although it may be feared, our shadow in this respect is gone back many degrees, yet did we lament after him, and long for him; could our souls by any means be quickned to follow hard after him, he would return for his servants sake, the tribes of his inheritance.

To help in this great case is the scope of the ensuing exhortation. a word spoken in season, like Apples of Gold in pictures of silver, the worth, beauty, and pleasantness whereof bespeaks its acceptance at the first view. A Subject of general concernment, wherein there is counsel for the Ruler, and instruction to all the people. Hear ye me Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: The Lord is with you while ye are with him; a weighty word in which we are not dealt with all about mint and annis, but life and death are set before us. Moreover the timing of this instruction seemeth to carry with it something of particular Remarks: The message sent us the last year, upon the like day and occasion, was as is known. Be thou instructed O Jerusalem, least my soul depart from thee, least I make thee desolate, a Land not inhabited. And now hear ye me Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin, the Lord is with you while ye be with him, and if you seek him he will be found of you, but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you. These are solemn treatments from the God of Heaven: Shall the hope of Israel, the Lord God of our fathers speak so much about leaving us, &c. and order in the way of his Providence, that his word be left upon record, and published to the view of all, and shall not we lay it to heart. Alas should poor New-England lose the presence of God, what would be left us but shame and misery. How precious a name is Jehovah-Shammah, Honourable enough to be engraven on the gates of Heaven: hath not this been written in legible though in smaller letters, on the Land on  
which

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*Which we live, and shall we provoke the holy God to rase it out and write upon us Jchabod instead thereof. O foolish people, not wise.*

*But I know the way of man is not in himself, so perverted are we by nature, that until a day of power comes down upon us, our hearts will not encline to God, and yet he needeth not to be beholden to us; he can make himself wellcome when he pleaseth, our hearts are in his hands as the Rivers of waters. He can prepare us for himself, and dwell with us in abundance of mercy. O Lord though our iniquities testifie against us; do it for thy Names sake.*

S. H.

2. Chron.





2 Chron. 15. 2.

*The Lord is with you while ye are  
with Him.*

**T**O make a little way to to these Words, with what is intended in and from them, I will only mind you of some Remarkables the holy Story mentions, concerning *Asa* King of *Judah*, viz. (1.) *That he was sincerely godly, a perfect and upright man*: though he had his faults (as there is no man that sinneth not) and fell sadly sundry wayes, towards the close of his time, as may be seen, *Chap. 16. 1, 10.* Yet it is said of him in way of commendation, *Chap. 15. 17. Nevertheless the heart of Asa was perfect all his dayes*: not only he did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord his God, *Chap. 14. 2.* but he did it like a Saint, as did *David* his Father, *1 King. 15. 11.* And thence also it stands Recorded concerning *Jehoshaphat* his Son and Successor, *That he walked in the way of Asa his Father, and departed not from it, doing that which was right in the sight of the Lord, Chap. 20. 32.* (2.) That as an effect and evidence of *Asa's* sincerity, he was engaged in that good work of Reforming Church and State, or a diligent endeavour to mend what was amiss

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in Religious or Civil respects, *Chap* 14. 3, 8. for he took away the Altars of the strange gods, &c. ( 3 ) That he met with disturbance by the endeavours of some of his evil-minded neighbours, *Chap*. 14. 9. The *Arabians*, that were near borderers upon the land of *Canaan*, made War against him. ( 4. ) That a famous and even full victory was given him against that multitude of enemies, by the power and goodness of God, *Chap* 14. 10, to the end. ( 5. ) That in their return from the vanquishment of those adversaries; there was a solemn and encouraging message sent them; Wherein may be minded,

1. By whom the message was sent, *Chap*. 15. 1. God ( the spirit of God ) was the Author, and *Azariah* the hand that conveyed it.

2. To whom the Message was delivered, *ver*. 2. *Hear ye me Asa and all Judah and Benjamin*; The Leader and the People, &c. the Chief and his followers.

3. The Message it self, or matter of it, which is summarily presented in the remainder of the second verse, and then is further illustrated and enlarged to *ver*. 7. In this second verse, we have the main sum of the message that was sent: and therein *First*, a general proposition set down. *The Lord is with you while ye are with him*. *Secondly*, That general is explained and amplified by two particulars presented, the one in way of promise, *If ye seek him he will be found of you*; the other in way of threatening, *But if you forsake him, he will forsake you*. It is the middle clause of the verse ( or the general conclusion therein



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therein declared ) That I intend to propose a few words from, upon the present occasion: Not to spend time in explaining the terms: I come immediately to the Doctrine, which may be thus Delivered ;

### DOCTRINE.

*That while a People are with God, He also is with them ;*

Or thus,

**The Lord without fail is and will be with his People when or while they are with Him.**

The Lord is with you while ye are with him.

The Words ( as is observed by some ) may be referred to time past, present or to come ; and so rendred indifferently, *The Lord hath been*, is, he will be with you upon your being with him.

To unfold and confirm the Truth mentioned, three things may be minded as matter of enquiry, viz. What it is for a people to be with God : and what for God to be with them ? and then whence or on what account He will be with them while they are with Him.

**Quest.** *What it is for a people to be with God?* Two things seem to carry the sence or sum of it, or there are two ways of a peoples being with God: viz. In their hearts and in their lives:

First, To be with him in their hearts: when the heart is right in his sight, and found faithful before him, as is said of *Abraham*, Nehem. 9: 8. *And foundest his heart faithful before thee*: There is a fixed heart-adherence to him; as the good man gave the exhortation, Acts. 11 23. *That with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord*. That with a stedfast immoveable decree of heart they should stick close to him; that nothing that they were to meet with, might-work a separation; or set them at distance again: And thus to be with him in heart, is by faith, love and fear.

1. Faith in him. As unbelief separates, holds or sends away the heart: The direct, natural, proper tendency and work of it is a heart-departure from God, Heb. 3. 12. *An evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God*; unbelief makes the heart stand off and go away from God, and Jesus Christ; so faith carries it to him; it is oftentimes called coming, John. 6. 35. coming or believing, are mentioned as the same thing; faith is the souls motion or making out to God in Christ: And then it keeps the heart with him. The propriety of it some not unmeetly express to be a tying by the Heart-strings to him: The heart so stays upon him as to stay with him, makes its stand there. This was one way of *Asa's* being with God, as the Seer said to him, 2 Chron. 15. 8. *Because thou didst rely upon the Lord*:



*Lord* : His heart got near to him in a time of need ; and so himself in the same case, 2 Chron. 4. 11. *Help us O Lord our God, for we rest on thee.* He expresseth his faith in prayer, which is the proper language of it: The prayer of faith—Faith in prayer brings the heart into his presence, but prayer without faith is like a bird without wings, that cannot get upwards to any purpose, but falls to the ground : Faith is always a necessary ingredient, one of the main requisites of right prayer : There is a must put upon it : *Hebrews 11. 6. He that cometh to God, must believe that he is*—They that would come to God, so as to be with him indeed, must have faith to lead and lift their hearts home to him ; Faith in his power and grace and faithfulness, *James 1. 6. But let him ask in Faith* : There will be defects *q. d.* do what you can, but be sure faith be not wanting, as you would get any thing by all your askings. Let not such an one ( that asks not in faith, that is, think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord, *verse 7.*

2. Love to him ; heartily and in good earnest to comply with the first and great Commandment, as our Saviour gives it, *Mat. 22. 37, 38. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind* ; this is the first and great Commandment. That the whole soul in all the faculties and powers of it, center and terminate upon him, as the alone adequate satisfying object of it. It is a great and precious promise, that is herein made, *Deut. 30. 6. The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.*

Blessed

Blessed things might be obtained, could we improve and press it for our selves and ours as we ought ; The love of all the heart belongs to him alone, and so not to be laid out upon any other. The truth is, not to love him above all, is not to love him at all ; unless he hath best love, he hath none indeed ; which is the import of that of the Apostle, 1 John 2. 15. *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* Know assuredly, and believe it alwayes, That the worlds leavings do not belong to God : It is downright Idolatry ( Spiritually so I mean ) when any thing in us of the world is set above him in the esteem and indearments of the heart ; when the choice and chief of mans love is bestowed upon creature objects, and the refuse only reserved for him, *Mat. 10. 37.* As he is the chiefest good, so thence also he indispenfibly demands highest love, as alwayes his due ; nor will any thing less or lower than that, find acceptance with him.

3 Fear of him, which as it is his undeniable right : *He ought to be feared*, *Psalm. 76. 11* the only object of religious fear : His right therein arises from all the discoveries he makes of himself ; every letter of his name bespeaks it, *Psalm. 111. 9. Holy, and to be feared is his name :* In special from his absolute soveraignty, *Job. 25. 2. Dominion and fear are with him :* dominion upon the account whereof he is to be feared. As some do, and all should fear him ; So indeed all shall do it one way or other ere he hath done ; such a day is coming, as will force the fearless ones to fear, *Isa. 2. 12, 3. 4. For the day of the Lord of Hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty—and upon all the Cedars of Lebanon—and upon all the Oaks*



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Oaks of Bashan, and upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up: Not only the little low shrubs, but the stately Cedars and sturdy Oaks; not only the mole hills but the mountains; man *i. e.* in their greatest heights and opposition to him: The Lord of Hosts hath a day to make them all stoop and tremble before him, as it follows, *verse 17. The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of man shall be made low*—And *verse 19. They shall go into the holes of the Rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his Majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth*: There is such authority and power appears in all his works as commends fear, *Psal. 66. 3. Say unto, God, how terrible art thou in thy works? And eminently his dealings with man, verse 5. He is terrible in his doings towards the children of men*: All sorts of men, *Psal. 76. 12. He shall cut off the Spirit of Princes*: He is terrible to the Kings of the earth; He is terrible out of his holy places, in the execution of judgments denounced by his Word, and the *Ministry* of it. Thus he is to be feared for his sovereign power, *Jer. 5. 22. It is a fearful thing for man, less then nothing man, not to fear the great God, Jer. 10. 7. His excellent greatness* (that hath all the world at command, to do what he will, in and with it) and so does his exceeding goodness, *Jer. 5. 24.—Hos. 3. 5.—*And as fear is his right, so it must be rendred to him: Wo to that Plantation, Colony or Country, of which it may be said, The fear of God is not in this place: it may be there are fair houses, large fields, full Shops and Barns, but if the fear of God be not there among the rest, their condition is exceeding

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ing woful: Suppose a person or a people to be as rich as may be in the things of this world, they are poor notwithstanding, miserably poor, if the fear of the Lord is not their treasure, as the word is, Isa. 33. 6 Be there never so much farming and merchandize, buying and selling, and gain got by it, it is not such wealth can make us rich indeed, while the fear of God is wanting: You may see how much weight he lays upon his fear, in that he hath made it one of the main grants of the Everlasting Covenant; Jer. 32. 40. *I will put my fear in their hearts*—It is not naturally there, no more than Faith or Love, nor can all the world lay it in to purpose, that is his peculiar work; *I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.* Though there are warpings of corruptions within, and workings of temptations without; sin swayes and Satan thams, yet they shall not be carried away; The fear of God in their hearts so holds them to and with him, that they shall not wickedly depart, or allow themselves in wandering from him. But that is the first head, one way of a peoples being with God, is in their hearts, by faith in, love to, and fear of him.

*Secondly,* Another way of a peoples being with him, is in their lives; to follow his work, and walk in his wayes, carefully avoiding what is contrary, and attending what is according to his Word, and the Revelations of his mind made in it: and that both wayes, As to his Will in general, and his Worship in particular.

I. As to his Will in general, in all the discoveries of it:



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it: wherein the command is *explicite* and plain, *1 Pet. 1: 15. Be ye holy in all manner of Conversation*: not only at sometimes, or in somethings, but universally, in various motions and managements, turnings to and fro, to keep close to Rule: This is one of the Lessons the Gospel teaches, or layes before us to learn, To labour a compliance with the Law, not as our title to life and happiness, but as the way that leads to its attainment, *Tit. 2. 11, 12. The grace of God that brings salvation hath appeared to all men. To all sorts of men, in the doctrinal discoveries and offers of it, and that wherever it comes brings instruction with it; teaching us, That denying ungodliness and worldly lusts (not to give way or welcome to sin, but shut the door fast against it, flatly and peremptorily refuse its entertainment, whatever tenders it makes) And then, that we should live soberly, righteously, and godlily in this present world:* The Doctrine of free Grace is no friend to sin, does not give men liberty to live as they list themselves, but layes and leaves them under Bonds of duty, even every way, towards God and men, themselves and others: And herein also the promise is *express*, that as it should be thus with the people of God at all times, so it shall be in his time, *Zech. 14. 20, 21. In that day shall there be upon the bells of the Horses, HOLINESSE TO THE LORD; And the pots in the Lords house shall be like the Bowles before the Altar; Tea every Pot in Jerusalem and Judah, shall be HOLINESSE TO THE LORD OF HOSTS.*—Their ordinary occasions and converses one way or other, managed in conformity to divine command; a stamp of holiness upon them; not only their hearing and praying, but their buying and selling

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their eating and drinking: The Will of God their Rule, and the Glory of God their end in all that is done.— This is our duty, and should be our design, 1 Cor. 10. 31. *Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God* ———

2. *As to his Worship in particular.* Our Saviour saith, John 4. 23, 24. *The true Worshipers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth.* — God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. However indifferent men commonly are therein; Christ you see mentions it as matter of necessity: That something may be done in this work indeed, two things are required, and must concur in it; it is not true Worship if either of them be wanting, viz.

1. It must be right for the matter, what God hath appointed, without addition or abatement, Deut. 12. 32. *What thing soever I command you, observe to do it, thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it;* neither more nor less as near as may be at least. Humane inventions are of no authority herein, we may be attended what ever pretences are made of their decency, significancy or usefulness one way or other in his service: Divine Institutions only must stand, whatever wants, that stump has no warrant for its use: — Will-worship hath at best but a shew of wisdom, Col. 2. 23. *Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in worship:* It is above the sphear of the wisdom of man to devise, or the will of man to determine the worship of God, in any the substantial parts of it; The circumstances of time, and place, &c. are necessarily left to common



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common prudence, But still 'tis his prerogative to resolve and order in what way, or by what means we shall worship him. His Word and the declaration of his Will made in and by it, is the only direction therein. And thence also will-worship is worth nothing, *Mat. 15. 9. In vain do they worship me, teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of men.* Though they have a true object of Worship (*they worship me*) yet if the means of Worship be false (*after the commandments of men*) it is in vain, to no purpose, neither acceptable to God, nor advantageous to themselves.

2. *It must be right for the manner too, as he hath appointed.* In sum, *That we perform it heartily and in his fear:* As in all obedience, that is the main; it was God's wish for them, speaking after the manner of men, *Deut. 5. 29. They promised fair when they were under the pang and impulse of their fear, through those awful appearances that were made upon mount Sinai, at the delivery of the Law, ver. 27. They said to Moses, Speak thou unto us, all that the Lord our God shall speak to thee, and we will hear it, and do it, verse 28. The Lord heard the voice of their words, and said, they have well said all that they have spoken; they give me good words, Oh that they would do as they say: Oh that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my Commandments alwayes, that it might be well with them and their Children for ever: To keep such a course, is the way to perpetuate a peoples welfare; And this is alwayes man's duty, Eccles. 12. 13. Fear God and keep his Commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.* But so

likewise as to this part of obedience, in particular, his Worship, it must be heartily attended; heartless services signifie not, *Isai. 29. 13. This people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me.* The body near but the soul a great way off, *Ezek. 33. 31. They come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words but they will not do them; for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.*

They behave themselves handsomly, with a visible demureness as to the outward man, in hearing the word, but their hearts in the mean time are in and with the world. And yet 'tis certain, That duty one or another, however formal and specious as to the out-side ceremony of them, without the heart, are but a shadow without any substance, a shell without any kernel; empty things that want something within to fill them, dead works, the carcass of duty without a soul: And then we must worship in his fear, *Psal. 5. 7. But as for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy; and in thy fear will I worship towards thy holy Temple*—As the consideration of his infinite mercy should set faith on work, so the remembrance of his glorious holiness should make us fear in all our approaches to him. Indeed the fear of God is so essential to, or in his worship, that it is sundry times put for it, as you may see by comparing, *Deut. 6. 13. with Mat. 4. 10. and Isa. 29. 13. with Mat. 15. 9. We cannot serve God acceptably, unless we do it with reverence, and godly fear, Heb. 12. 28, 9.*—You see that there are two ways for a people to be with God: To be with him



him in their hearts, by a fixed adherence to him, in faith, love and fear ; and to be with him in their lives, by a faithful attendance of his will in general, and his worship in particular.

*Quest. 2 The next enquiry is, What it is for God to be with a people ? or how he is with them that are with him.*

*Ans.* There are several ways of Gods being with men. As there is his essential presence, whereby he is equally in distant from all persons and places : Such is the immensity of his glorious being, that he is no where included or excluded—1 Kings 8. 27. *Behold the heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee, Jer. 23. 24. do not I fill heaven and earth, (saith the Lord. ( Again, there is his general providential presence, in way of powerful efficiency, preserving and governing what he hath made, to the attainment of his own ends. And thus he is not far from every one of us ; For in him we live and move and have our being: Acts 17. 27. In those respects, no man is or can be without God ; for so he is not only with Saints and Angels in Heaven, and with men (godly and wicked) on earth, but with the devils and damned too, Psal. 139. 7——10 Whither shall I flee from thy presence ? If I ascend up into Heaven thou art there ; If I make my bed in Hell, behold thou art there.——But the thing here intended is his being with men in a way of favour and good will : his gracious presence, as it is commonly called, looking after and manifesting his care of and kindness to them, wherein you may distinctly mind, two or three things.*

*First, There is the protecting presence of God, whereby he defends his people against evil : whether it be —*

1. By saving them from trouble, preventing it when and how he will, Acts 18. 10. *For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee*; either they should not desire it (As Exod. 34. 24. *Neither shall any man desire thy Land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord thy God, thrice in the year.* God can bind the lusts of men, their pride, malice and covetousness; he sets what limits he will to their workings) or at least they should not do it. *No man shall set upon thee to hurt thee*: You know what was said to the *Philadelphian Church*, Rev. 3. 10. *I also will keep thee from the hour of Temptation.*——When an hour of temptation goes far and wide, carries a great breadth with it (As *Trajan's Persecution*, which sundry take to be there intended, generally reached to all the parts of the *Roman Empire*, that upon the account of his largeness, is called all the world, as also it is, Luke 2. 1.) yet the Lord can shelter whom he pleaseth from sharing in it; Or,

2 By saving them in trouble. That is a way that he oftentimes takes to secure his people: They suffer, and yet nevertheless safe, Job. 5. 19. Psal. 91. 9, 10. *Because thou hast made the most high thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh the dwelling*: In midst of evils, and yet meet with no evil; none i. e. that shall be eventually hazardous to their main interest: The presence of the chiefest good keeps  
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real evil at distance: He that dwells in God, or makes the most High his habitation, is out of reach of ruining danger. The Scripture abounds in the discovery of Gods being with his people in this way, *Isai. 41. 10. and 43. 2. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee and through the Rivers they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee; neither floods shall drown, nor flames hurt them: Psal. 32. 6.* There may be waters, great waters, and floods of them, and the godly man (of whom he there speaks) in them too, and yet surely they shall not come nigh him, to his damage or undoing; He may be soaked, but shall not sink or miscarry there: Of like meaning is the great sight Moses met with, *Exod. 3. 2, 3.* Such a sight (a great sight) is not seldom to be seen, *Through the goodwill of him that dwells in the Bush, the more it flames the more it flourisheth.* Heaviest sufferings that betal his servants are physick and not poyson, not to kill but cure, *Isai. 27. 9.* the worst he means is to make them better, *Heb. 12. 10. Their evil things are at work for good, Rom. 8. 28. To exercise their Grace, and so increase their glory, 2 Cor. 4. 17.* The soaking of the vessels of mercy in the waters of affliction, help to widen and fit them for greater measures of that pure river of water of life, clear as Christal, proceeding out of the Throne of God, and of the Lamb, *Rev. 22. 1.*

3. By saving them out of trouble, This is added, *Psal. 37. 39, 40. The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord: He is their strength in time of trouble; and the Lord shall*

shall help them and deliver them : he shall deliver them from the wicked and save them, because they trust in him. Such a promise was given the Prophet for his encouragement in his work, *Jer. 1. 19. They shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee, for I am with thee saith the Lord to deliver thee : When they have done what they can I will deliver thee :* And so more generally *Jer. 29. 11. I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end.* Though others know not his thoughts towards them, *Micah. 4. 11, 12.* When God sends the daughters of Sion to *Babylon* to be delivered, *ver. 10.* They say, *let her be defiled, let our eye look upon Sion.* But they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they his counsel : 'tis certain his peoples enemies are not of his council, they know not the thoughts of the Lord, nor his people themselves neither sometimes, yet he knows them ; The close of the greatest day of *Jacobs* trouble, is, that he shall be saved out of it, *Jer. 30. 7. Psal. 34. 19.*

*Secondly,* There is the providing providence of God, whereby he suits his people in their wants : He knows what they need, and sends them a supply, *Phil. 4. 19.* in temporal, and especially in spiritual respects, *Psal. 34. 10.* nothing indeed good for them, or conducing to the furtherance of their internal and so eternal welfare shall be withheld, *Psal. 85. 11.*

*Thirdly,* There is his prospering blessing presence ; succeeding them in their works, *Gen. 24. 3, 23 : The Lord was*



## Israel's Welfare,

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*was with Joseph, and made all that he did to prosper. To have God with us, is the way to have all go well; His favourable presence, brings outward prosperity, in what measure he sees meet. And succeeding them in his work, that I mean that more nearly concerns them in relation to him, upon a soul-account, Mat. 28. 20. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, And lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the World. As with Ministers in teaching, so with Churches also in attending what he requires; to keep his work going, or lift it forward in their hearts and hands.*

*Quest. The last enquiry mentioned, is, Whence or on what account will the Lord be with a people that are with him?*

The Answer may be given in a word, either way;

1. Negatively, 'Tis not from any merit there is in them, or any thing they do. There's no such thing indeed: *Jacob* said it, *Gen. 32. 10. I am not worthy the least of all thy mercies.* Plain *Jacob* did not complement, but spake his heart in it, He saw and felt what he said, *That though he wanted many things, yet not worthy of any thing.* The great-Faith'd Centurion said it, *Luk. 7.6. I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof:* The Elders of the Jews gave a high account of him, *ver. 4, 5. saying, that he was worthy for whom he should do this, in that he loveth our Nation.*——As if what he had done for them, deserved what they desired of him: But he was of another mind himself, *I am not Worthy*——Our Saviour teacheth all his followers to say it, *Luk. 17. 10.*

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*When you have done all those things that are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do: we owe him utmost obedience, and so he can't be debtor to us for any thing we do, to whom all we do is due debt.*

2. Affirmatively; *It is from his own free Mercy.* As 'tis his Grace that enables men to be with him; where there is any thing that way indeed, they are beholding to him for what they have and do in it, *Joh. 15. 5.* So 'tis Grace also that engages him to be with them: Remarkable is that passage to this purpose, *Psal. 44. 17, 8, 9.* *All this is come upon us, yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy Covenant: our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way; though thou hast sore broken us in the place of Dragons, It follows, ver. 26. Arise for our help, and redeem us for thy mercies sake.* They do not lean upon, or plead any merit in what they have done, but look to, and implore his mercy in what they still need to be done. *Redeem us for thy mercies sake.*

The Use now follows, and that may be let fall under two Heads, of *Information* and *Exhortation*:—

The first is of *Information*;

USE I. The Truth in hand may help to inform us in several things; I will only intimate two or three, without tarrying on them. —

1. Hence



1. Hence see that the wicked are back friends to the places wherein, or people among whom they live; and that because they help to drive God from them, which is the worst and most baneful work they can be busied in: *One sinner destroyes much good; One Achan (as the case may be) is enough to trouble a whole Camp.* It is a solemn awful word you have, *Prov. 15. 29. The Lord is far from the wicked:* For God and his Salvation go together. But *Psal. 85. 9. Surely his salvation is nigh to them that fear him, that glory may dwell in our Land:* The World is commonly weary of such (had rather have their room than their company) they are not aware, or not willing to own how much they are beholding to them; that they stand in the gap for them, and help to fend off many a blow that would otherwayes fall heavy. *If there be ten Righteous* said the Lord to *Abraham*, when standing before him in behalf of *Sodom*, *I will spare the City, and not destroy it for their sake*, *Gen. 18.* latter end. Yea, one righteous *Lot* kept fire and brimstone from coming down upon that wicked place, till he was got out of it, *Gen. 19. 22.* It commonly fares with a People, as righteousness or sin finds entertainment among them: so saith the divine Proverb, *Prov. 14. 34. Righteousness exalteth a Nation.* The righteous Lord loveth righteousness, and loves them that follow after him: His countenance beholds the upright; He is with them in way of favour and thence they farewell: But sin is a reproach to any people. To any people, however near and dear they sometimes were to him, yet sin makes him stand aloof, and then they lower a pace, *Jer. 12. 7: I have left my heritage, I have given the dearly beloved of my soul into*

into the hand of her enemies, Jeremiah 22. 24. —————

2. Hence see the rise and reason of the *Lords* departure from a people, and so whether to refer his absenting from us, one way or other: *Gideon* put the question to the Angel of the *Lord*, that appeared to him, Judges 6. 12, 3. *If the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us: And where are all his wonders which our fathers told us of?* may it not be said in our case, *If the Lord be with us, as formerly, why have these things befallen us, what mean such and such testimonies of his anger?* Assuredly we cant justly fault him on any account, *who is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works*: The departure does not begin on his hand; if you forsake him, he will forsake you; and not else: The blame belongs to and must be laid upon our sins, and our selves for them, Jer 2. 17. *hast thou not procured this to thy self, in that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, when he led thee by the way, and chap. 4. 18.* —'tis sin pushes God from a people, that he cannot keep them company as he is ready to do for us: forces him as it were to fall out with them, Jer. 44. 22. So that the *Lord* could no longer bear, *because of the evil of your doings* — *He that is slow to anger, of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil, Joel. 2. 13.* yet Sin (impenitently continued) makes him weary of repenting, Jer. 15. 6, 7. Sin wearies him out of his house, wherein he sometimes dwelt, moves him to leave his Sanctuary: *Ezek. 8. 6.* when they made that malepert sawcy question *Isa. 58. 3.* *Wherefore have we fasted, and thou seest not* — murmuring as if there were some wrong done them, that they had not the deliverance they desired, but were followed



lowed with pressures though they had followed him with prayers : There is a full answer given in it, *Isai: 59. 2, 3. q. d.* you charge God foolishly, to imagine there is any defect with him ; his hands are as able to help, and his ear as open to hear as ever ; he wants neither power nor pity to do for you ; that which wounds you, is at home. But your iniquities have separated between you, and your God : Let the finger be laid upon the right fore, you will find that sin is in all the fault. So *Jer: 5: 25: Your sins withhold good things from you ; 'tis sin that turns away good things, and pulls down evil upon a people,——* And then,

3. Hence see the right way for a people to keep or recover the presence of God :

1. To keep his presence : would you indeed have it continued ? do you desire his abode with you in a way of good will ? the text tells you how it is to be attained, *The Lord is with you, while you are with him.* Be it never so long, do not leave him, and he will not leave you : Wherein we have experience to confirm us : our fathers have found him very near to relieve them in their need, *Psal. 22. 4, 5.* How solemn and signal were the expressions of his kindness to them : many a deliverance was sent them, wrapt up in return of prayer.—

But 2. Which comes ( it may be ) nearer to our case, here is the right way before us to recover the presence of God, when, so far as it is lost, *Zech. 1. 3. Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, return to me saith the Lord of Hosts.*  
and

*and I will return to to you, saith the Lord of Hosts.* Could we make work on't in getting back again to him, he would then ( through grace ) meet us more than half the way. Let me speak freely herein, it is sensibly certain, we have got nothing by wandring, and therefore it is time to give it over : I may confidently assert in the audience of this Assembly, That scarce (if ever) people had more cause or call to make that conclusion than we, Hof. 2. 7. *I will go and return to my first Husband, for then it was better with me than now.* That is the meaning of the thorn-hedge, and high wall that hath been made in our way, to perswade and even necessitate us to such a resolve? Shall I say, it was better every where in Family, Church, Town and Colony; and better every way, we had better peace and plenty, better health and harvests, in former than later years; it was better for soul and body, better in spirituals, less Sin; and better in temporals, less sorrow : Oh that New-England might yet say it in good earnest, and do accordingly : *I will return to my first Husband, for then it was better with me than now* : The recovery of first love and first works, would be our glory : let me bespeak it in those words, Hof. 6. 1. *Come let us return unto the Lord for he hath torn, and he will heal us ; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.* Were such a mutual excitation well pressed and warmed upon our own and one anothers hearts, to an awakening real and practical attendance of it, it would be a precious salve for our sore. This is the way to recover the presence of God, to return to him, and therefore turn from all sin, Ezek. 18. 30. The terms are fair and just : Only be sure you are real and through in it,



it, Jer. 4. 1. *Stand no where till you come to him ; or the words may be read. If thou wilt return to me, return daily not, but do it indeed :* Let your hearts fall out with Sin, and fall in with God and Christ : the contrary is complained of, Jer. 3. 10. *Her treacherous sister Judah, hath not turned to me with her whole heart, but feignedly saith the Lord.* Pictures of repentance will not pass in Heaven, it is vain to dissemble with him that cannot be deceived. For men to feign or counterfeit a conversion only, is but trifling and treachery in his esteem, whatever it stands for with others : but be hearty and home with it, and then hold it too ; so turn as to tarry with him ; take heed of Flashes and Flattery, fast and loose, off and on with him, Hos. 6. 4. *Your goodness is as the morning cloud, and as the early dew that passeth away, a thin, impertinent thing, that hath no substance or stability in it : soon vanisheth whatever shew it makes : And truly if our goodness towards him (our repentance and reforming) be as the morning cloud, what can we look for but that his goodness towards us should be as the morning cloud too ; which seem to be the sense of, Hos. 13. 3. Therefore they shall be as the morning cloud, and as the early dew that passeth away ; their welfare and comfort, quickly waited and consumed ; look to it, you be fixed and steady here, to get to, and stay with him : Isa. 30. 15. Hos. 3. 3. —*

U S E II.

The main use I would make of it, is in way of exhortation, and invitement to all among us, that they observe

erve and do their duty herein : Hear ye me *Asa* and all *Judah* and *Benjamin*. *The Lord is with you while ye are with him* : my work here is to press it upon the hearts of all, rich and poor, high and low : to take this course for the attainment of the end mentioned, *to be with God, that he may be with us* : —

In prosecution of it, I will turn the exhortation in particular three wayes, and then render a few words of general advice upon it.——

The exhortation herein may be particularly laid before and left with three sorts.

*First*, Magistrates : civil leaders in their several stations of subordinate power.

Honoured Sirs ! Suffer me to say, *Be you with God, and he will be with you* : As there is direction given in his word, for the work of an Election-Day, who are to be chosen to such place and employment, *Exod. 18. 21* : *Provide out of all the people, able men, such as fear God ; men of truth, hating covetousness, and place such over them, to be Rulers of thousands, and Rulers of hundreds*—— Plainly implying that none but such are desirably furnished for any place of Rule among the people of God ; Men of God, and men for God ; able men, ( men of wisdom and courage ) such as fear God, men of truth, ( men of piety as well as parts, *fearers of God, and faithful to him and his interest*. Those are some of the best qualifications required to fit men for publick Rule, *Neb. 7: 2* : *And hating covetousness* ; not meerly or so much seeking



## Israel's Welfare.

seeking their private wealth (though it is not meet they should serve for nought; it is the wisdom and duty of a people, according to their capacity, to afford an honourable acknowledgment to them that attend such heavy work, but mainly seeking the publick welfare, *Nehem. 2. 10. Esther 10. 3.* — But as there is a directory left for choosers (whom it concerns to attend their work therein, not as matter of indifferency or carnal design, but with care and conscience to discharge that mighty betrustment, which also the free-mans Oath directly obliges to) so likewise there is the duty of the chosen expressly set down. The general sum of it is declared in that of *David, 2 Sam. 23. 3. The God of Israel said, The Rock of Israel spake to me; He that ruleth over men, must be just, ruling in the fear of God: To be managed by the fear of God in administering Justice to men: their work lies either way, towards God and towards man; I mean now, they are set to keep both Tables; as far as may be to secure those under them in an undisturbed practice of duty therein; that they may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.* —

1. In matter of Religion, it belongs to such, not only to serve God themselves, and be faithful and fervent in it, that their hearts be lifted up in his ways, *2 Chron. 17. 6. But to see that his worship be publicly maintained and managed in all places under their power; That none in that sense, be without the true God, and without a teaching Priest, and without law, which is pointed at verse 3. as in part the intendment of the text: This was a main work Asa was busied in before this message was sent*

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him,

him, 2 Chron. 14. 3, 4, 5. To reform Religion, and set things to rights therein according to the direction of the word. And this also he went forward with afterward ; as may be seen verse 8. of this chapter : And though he did not fully reach what he wou'd, yet he went as far as he could in it: verse 17. As did Jehosaphat after him, chap. 23. 33. *Howbeit the high places were not taken away* : For as yet the people had not prepared their hearts unto the God of their Fathers — A people sometimes, not very seldome clog and hinder the design of godly Rulers ; there is no perswading them to amend to purpose unless God put it into their hearts : However Leaders must perform their part, whatever opposition or impediments they meet with : *As they are called Gods (Psal. 82. 6.) so it concerns them very nearly to take care of the things of God ; without which, how can they expect he should be with them, or their work be Rewarded.* —

2. In matter of Righteousness, their work is large ; In general, a faithful endeavour to do every man right without favour or fear, 2 Sam. 8. 15. *David executed judgment and justice to all his people* : Such an account Job gives of himself as to his behaviour in his publick ruling-capacity, Job. 29. 14. *I put on righteousness, and it clothed me ; my judgment was a Robe and a Diadem.* Righteous Judgment is both necessary and adorning to Rulers, their clothing and their Crown : The best and most beautiful robe they have to array themselves with, as such : In particular to relieve the injured, as it follows, Job. 29. 15. 6. *I was eyes to the blind, and feet*  
to-



## Israel's Wellfare.

*to the lame, I was a Father to the poor.* The meaning of those metaphors (saith Mr. Caryl) is that his care to defend them in their just cause, was extensive and effectual: And then to quell wrong doers; wherein they need a quick and watchful eye, to find out sin in its converts (*verse 16. The ways which I knew not, I searched out*) and a steady weighty hand, to follow sin home, according to its desert: *verse 17: I brake the jaws of the wicked, and pluckt the spoil out of his teeth.*—'tis said of secure Laish, Judges 18. 7. *There was no Magistrate (no master or keir of restraint) in the land that might put them to shame in any thing.* The lusts of men will easily run wild, if there be no restraint laid upon them: Some men (and not a few neither) will without fail do shamefully, if there be none to put them to shame for what is done. They that have not conscience enough, must have somewhat else to curb them:— This is the design and duty of Rulers, Rom. 13. 3, 4. *The sword of civil power is put into their hand by divine appointment, as to reward them that do well, so to wound evil doers; not to strike with it at a venture whoever comes in their way, much less to turn the edge towards the innocent. It is their wisdom to make the wicked feel the wheel, Prov. 20. 26. to crush their wickedness, or weary them out of their unclean, intemperate, and unrighteous courses.*—Let me crave the patience of a few plain inoffensive words in this plot, I particularly propose that a through care and course may be taken, to prevent or suppress that woful trade of Indian drunkenness; wherein doubtless it may be said that such as find the matter or fuel for it, are deeply guilty of that fearful excess,

## The Way of

and the fatal mischief that so commonly falls upon it; If there be any that need and conscientiously desire a resolution in this case, *viz. whether selling strong drink to the heathen, as things are circumstanced, be sinful, or moral evil, and as such to be avoided?* I will turn aside so far as to tender two words that way:

1.—It is against the law of God; which by common consent of Divines, commands not only to avoid the gross acting of this or that evil, but temptations to and incentive of sin in our selves or others: It is a good general rule that is given for the right understanding of the Commandments; That where any sin is forbidden all the degrees, causes, means, occasions, and appearances of it are forbidden also. Let it be seriously pondred, and conscience sadly questioned upon it in the case mentioned; *Is this to abstain from all appearance of evil?* 1 Thes 5. 22. yea, is it not a direct means to further the commission of sin? *what less is done by this practice, then to put the bottle to them, and make them drunken also, as the expression is, Hab 2. 15.* Is it an innocent thing now a-days, to deliver a sword into a mad mans hand, suppose he proffer mony for it; or is it no sin to lay a *stumbling block in the way of the blind?* Rom. 14. 13. *That no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in anothers way.* Those two words (*as is observed*) intend such offences, whereby others are either grieved or encouraged to sin: *By this course are not the people of God grieved, and the heathen hardened in their wickedness, and so helped to hell?* Again, *by such things is not great occasion given to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme & do, or will they not*



not learn to say, their Religion is no better than ours, they will do any thing for a little money :

And again, Is there not Covetousness in feeding their Lusts for filthy lucre's sake, and unrighteousness in wringing that little they have out of their hands, by excessive and so dishonest gain: — In a word, Those that enable the Natives, to sin against God (which in this way they would not do, without the sellers assistance ) are they not accessory in his account, of all the Drunkenness and Murders that by this means abounds among them.

2. *It is against the Law of Man*; and that also adds to the evil of it: it is a violation of a just and good Law, made on purpose to prevent sin against God, and provocation to the eyes of his glory by it.

But to return; I am bold to say, That this evil among many others may, yea must be effectually declared against, *lest the Land be defiled with blood*, and so pity to some particulars, prove cruelty to the publick. — The Lord grant our Leaders may never cause us to erre one way or other; or bring more wrath upon *Israel*, so much as by a connivance at that which is openly and apparently evil. That downright daring wickedness may not walk the streets among us ( as it does too commonly in some places ) for want either of wholesome Laws, or home execution of them: I only add here, what they sometimes said, in the case then before them, *Ezra 10. 4. Arise, for this matter belongs to thee, we also will be with thee; be of good courage and do it.* May I not say in the  
name

name of all the tremblers at the words of the God of *Israel* among us ( saving at least some particular mistakes and temptations. ) This matter ( much honoured ) belongs to you, *we also will be with you* ; Be of good courage and do it : however, should men fail never so much feare not but God will stand by you in his work, 2 *Chron.* 19. 6, 7. And *Jehosaphat* said to the Judges, *Take heed what you do, for ye judge not for man but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgment* : wherefore now let the fear of the Lord be upon you, take heed and do it ; for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts : It follows, ver. 11. *Deal courageously, and the Lord shall be with the good.*——

Secondly, *Ministers* ; My Brethren, and my Fathers, give me leave to say, *Let us be with God and he will be with us* : The Lord hath made us Watchmen, to watch for souls, as those that must give account. And therein our work is, to receive the word at his mouth, and give warning from him, to deliver his mind and message plainly, *Jer.* 23. 28. *He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully : What is the chaffe to the wheat saith the Lord.* To awaken men from sin, and warn them to a Saviour, by both Doctrine and Conversation, to lead in the way to heaven : The Lord give wisdom to win Souls ; so assist and succeed in his work, that his word may run and be glorified ; and, if it be his holy will, prevent the coming of such a woful day, that from the prophets of this *Jerusalem*, prophaneſs should go forth in the Land, or that word be made good against us, *Michah* 2. 11 *if a man walking in the spirit of falshood do lye, saying, I will*



*will prophesie to thee of wine and strong drink, he shall even ; be the prophet of this people.*

Thirdly, *The Lords People*, the bulk or body of them I may say here also, *Be you with God and he will be with you:—* Take heed of forsaking him ; you have seen and felt some of the sad effects of it, See *Isai. 9. 12, 13. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand stretched out still, for the people turneth not to him that smiteth them :* if we want more woe, that is a sure way to find it: it is not so much what some particular persons do (the Lord alwayes hath a mourning remnant) but how the generality of a people demean themselves towards him : Oh look to your work, and labour to do it well, and that is duty to God and man.

1<sup>st</sup> Duty towards God, *1 Sam. 12. 24. Only Fear the Lord and serve him in truth with all your hearts.—* Certainly, however common such a course is among men, it is contempt that cannot long be born with, to set the World above God, to say (though never so secretly) of his service, what a weariness is it? *When shall the new moon be gone that we may sell Corn, and the Sabbath that we may set forth Wheat,* Amos 8. 5. Such things make way for the worst of Famines, *ver. 11. The Lord seeth not as man seeth,* man looketh on the outside appearance *but the Lord looks upon the heart,* 1 Sam. 16. 7. He desires truth in the inward parts; the heart to be with him, and at work in attendance of his will. But whither are our hearts gone? how familiar and yet fatal is it, to have Lamps without Oil, seems of Religion without sincerity a name.

name to live without the thing : can it be a little matter to make light of the great motion of the Gospel ( forgiveness and salvation, grace and glory therein tendered upon fairest, freest terms ) and go one to his Farm, and the other to his Merchandize, *Mat. 22:5. How shall we escape, Heb. 2 3.* What more provoking vileness can there be, than for lost, ruined, wretched sinners, to cast a Redeemer his riches & righteousness at their heels, with all the love and bowels held forth by him. To refuse the shelter of his wings, and shake off his Government, not to be won by his wooings, nor welcom him with all his Treasures, while many a trifle in mean time, finds entertainment : Think of it sadly a thousand times, will it not be bitterness in the latter end, to prefer other things before the kingdom, to mind the body more than the soul, earth more than heaven, a moment more than eternity ? what account can be given, or apology made for mens behaviour herein ? to love pleasures more than God, *2 Tim. 3, 4. Creatures more than Christ, Mat. 10. 37.* Oh that wisdom may be given from above to build sure ; rest nowhere short of God, chuse his favour as your life, his fellowship as your happiness, his bosome as your resting place. — Seek not Ordinances meerly, but to meet with God in and by them, let that be the mark that is aimed at, that nothing may satisfie without its attainment : here is the mantle but where is God ? what doth it avail to dwell in *Jerusalem*, and not see the Kings face : an empty Sanctuary can never fill Souls, *Psal. 63. 1, 2. Prize his patience, and press after it, his convincing, humbling, converting patience as infinitely better than the best in the World.* We are gone if the Lord give us milcarrying womb, and dry



dry breasts on this account. That few should be born again ( by soaking repentance, and unfeigned Faith, sent from heaven into their hearts ) and those that are born weak and dwarf-like, little growth and progress gained : the things that remain ready to die, *Rev. 3.2.* In a low, lazy, languishing posture : some life it may be, but little liveliness :

Learn (if possible ) to value things as they are ; and so let interest in and enjoyment of God stand high in your esteem ; communion with God in Christ, to be begun, and as may be carried on by ordinances here, and then compleated, and everlastingly continued in heaven. *Let this ( this ) be the one thing needful in your eye, Luk. 10. 42. the alone matter of absolute necessity ; And as such the one thing of your endeavours, Psal. 27.4.* Nothing desired comparatively to them, and nothing absolutely but this. And thence also the one thing of your endeavours *Phil. 3.13,14.*—never near enough till as near as may be, get quite home to an immediate filling vision and fruition of God blessed for ever.

2ly. *Duty towards man : How is the faithful City become an Harlot ; It was full of Judgment, righteousness lodged in it, Isai. 1.21.* It is exceeding dangerous for the noble vine, to degenerate in such plain things.— Is this the fruit of all the cost, care and kindness bestowed upon us, to disappoint him of his just expectation, *Isai. 5.7.* He *looked for judgment, but behold oppression, for righteousness but behold a cry:* If that be the case (as how much and far it is, the Lord seeth ) what can we look for, but to be

laid wast, *Isai. 5.*—It is mentioned as the Standard Rule of righteousness to render to all their dues, *Rom. 13: 7:* *As to God the things that are Gods.* (his fear and honour and obedience) *so to man the things that are mans:* (Owe no man any thing but to love one another, ver: 8:) And among the rest to Superiors in particular, what by divine law belongs to them.

As constantly to pray for them, *1 Tim. 1, 2.* *That supplications—be made for all men; for Kings, and for all that are in authority;* so conscientiously to submit to them: The command is peremptory, *Rom. 13. 1.* *Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers,* and ver. 5. *Ye must needs be subject, not only for truth, but also for Conscience sake,* *Tit. 3. 1.* Obedience to Magistrates is a moral duty that all men should mind, yet many need to be minded of it, *1 Pet. 2. 13, 14, 17.* *Fear God, honour the King.* The high ones of the earth are to be honoured, according to the place wherein they stand, still reserving that fear and homage that belongs to the most high that is in Heaven: Humane power to command is limited to things lawful, consonant and not contrary to the will of God; for in that case the conclusion stands fast, and we may and must stay upon it, *Act. 5. 29.* *We ought to obey God rather than men.*

That which now remains, is to mention two words of general advice, about the matter before us, viz. *To fasten the necessity that so it must be, and then follow the suit that so it may be.*—

1. Fasten the necessity that so it must be: It were well if



if we could believe it in earnest, or feel the weight that lies upon us herein. — And that is,

I. *We must have God with us : For*

*1st. Our condition is exceeding woful if he withdraw from us. Nothing more fatal can befall a people, than for God to forsake them, Jer. 23. 33. What burden? I will even forsake you saith the Lord, that is a burden heavy enough, to sink men into all manner of misery, Hos. 9. 12 Yea, woe also to them, when I depart from them: 'tis as it were all woes gathered into one.*

*The worst condition in the world with God, is better than the best that can be without him: Exod. 33. 15. If thy presence go not, carry us not up hence: They were then in the wilderness, a land of deserts and pits, of drought and of the shadow of death; and they were going to Canaan a plentiful Country, the glory of all lands, (Ezek. 20. 6.) you see what Moses said upon it, If thy presence go not —*

*A wast howling wilderness with God, better than a land flowing with milk and honey without him: yea, earth with him, is better than Heaven without him. Alas, if our rock fell us, we are ruined: All is lost if God leave us: — onely (as you have sometimes heard from another, better hand) let it be remembred, That as a peoples forsaking God is not wont to be all at once, but by sundry steps they go away: though sometimes fearful haste is made in it. — Judg. 2. 17. They turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the Commandments of the Lord: but they did not so. Look into families and other societies, is there not too visible and*

general a declension ; are we not turned ( and that quickly too ) out of the way wherein our fathers walked : we have a form of godliness, but how far from that life and power of it, that was found with them : profession we make, but practical religion and righteousness, how low doth it run with very many. Is not our wine at least mingled with water.—But I say, as the common course is, for a people gradually to slide and steal off from God, until ( if infinite grace step not in, to bring them to a stand ) they are gone far away, it may be to an irremoveable distance ; so likewise his departure from a people is by several, ( and sometimes more secret, undiscovered degrees ; there are many removes made of the glory ; and by that means he may be gone a great way, before they are aware.—

2. Our welfare is wrapt up in his being with us, *Rom. 8. 21.* *If God be for us, who can be against us ?* sometimes there are many against them that God is for, and yet always there are more with, then against them ; for himself alone is more than all : As there is no wisdom against the Lord, *Prov. 21. 30.* *For the foolishness of God is wiser than men ;* so there is no power against the Lord, *for the weakness of God is stronger than men : 1 Sam. 14. 6* There is no restraint to the Lord to save by many, or by few, *2 Chron. 14. 11.* let a people be never so few and feeble, and their enemies never so many and mighty, *If God be with them, all will be well, Zech. 12. 3.* Thus we must have God with us :



2. To that end, we must be with him; *Ezra. 10. 12.* As thou hast said, so must we do: absolute necessity lyes, upon it: we must trust in and obey him, we must fear and follow him, we must depart from evil and do good we must fall in with his will, and walk in his ways: And then, *Prov. 16. 7.* when a person, and so a peoples ways, please the Lord, he maketh even their enemies to be at peace with them. *He will change their hearts, or chain their hands, or some way work that they shall do them no real damage.*——

2. Follow the sute, that so it may be both ways : 1. That we may be with God, or that he would powerfully perswade us from our wandrings; heart and life distances from him; that is a prayer that is very proper in our case, *Lamen. 5. 21.* *Turn thou us to thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned: renew our days as of old.*——

However hard the work is, impossible to men and means, if thou wilt undertake it, it shall be done. The Prophet mentioned it among his acknowledgments, *Dan. 9. 12.* *All this evil is come upon us, yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities.*——They had their praying times in the captivity; the fast of the fifth and seventh month, but they did not lay weight enough (at least the generality of them) upon that of converting grace to be granted them. May not, yea, must not we say after them in it: *All this evil is come upon us (evils of suffering, of so many kinds and degrees) yet we have not made our prayer that we might turn from our iniquities; not followed that petition with such sense and earnestness, as is suited to it:*

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we had need mend them, and make better work on't: *Hos. 10. 12. it is high time, Oh let it be taken while it lasts, lest it be too late ere long.* A rain of righteousness, soaking showers of converting sanctifying grace sent from heaven into our hearts, will do the business for us, and indeed nothing else: And,

2. *That God may be with us*; The Gospel Story tells us, *Luke 23. 28, 9. He made as though he would have gone further, but they constrained him, saying, abide with us: pressing importunity is the way to prevail with him; It would be sad indeed; should it be said of us, as Isai. 64. 7. There is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee, not absolutely one, but comparatively few: no wonder if he be gone, if we can find but few hands or hearts to hold him with us: wrestling Jacob got the blessing, Gen. 32. 26, 28. Surely he will not leave us, without our own consent, if we cannot be willing to let him go: we were a happy people, could we heartily joyn to send that great request to Heaven, which Solomon sometimes made in and for the Congregation of Israel, 1 Kings 8. 57, 58. That whatever we want, he would be with us, to incline our hearts to himself, to close with him by faith, and cling to him in obedience; that it may be well with us and our children after us: Oh let every soul put to its hand to lift up such a request, pray hartily and pray hard, & give not over till you have got this blessing; and then shall the name of our Jerusalem be the Lord is there.*



